

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims below replaces all prior version of the claims in this application.

1. (Currently Amended) An electrical contact material comprising a matrix made of conductive metal and an unstable fraction incorporated into this matrix, said unstable fraction having the property of decomposing between the operating temperature of the electrical contact and the melting point of said metal, with the release of a gas capable of destabilizing an electric arc, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said material includes, in addition, a refractory fraction.
2. (Currently Amended) The material according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said metal is silver or copper.
3. (Currently Amended) The material according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said unstable fraction includes at least one hydride.
4. (Currently Amended) The material according to claim 3, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said hydride is based on at least one of the elements selected from the group consisting of Ti, Zr, Hf, V, Nb, Mg, Ta, Cr, Mo, W, Fe, Co, Ni, La, and Y.
5. (Currently Amended) The material according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said unstable fraction constitutes between 5 and 50% of its volume.
6. (Cancelled).
7. (Currently Amended) The material according to claim 1, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said refractory fraction comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of CdO, SnO₂, ZnO, Fe₂O₃, Ni, Fe, W, Mo, C, WC and MgO.
8. (Currently Amended) The material according to ~~one~~ claim 1, wherein

~~characterized in that~~ the refractory fraction and the unstable fraction constitute between 5 and 50% of its volume, the unstable fraction constituting at least 2% of said volume.

9 - 20. (Cancelled).

21. (Currently Amended) An electrical contact material comprising a matrix made of silver and an unstable fraction incorporated into this matrix, said unstable fraction having the property of decomposing between the operating temperature of the electrical contact and the melting point of said silver, with the release of a gas capable of destabilizing an electric arc, and said ~~characterized in that the~~ unstable fraction including at least one hydride based on at least one of the elements selected from the group consisting of Ti, Hf, V, Nb, Mg, Ta, Cr, Mo, W, Fe, Co, Ni, La, and Y.

22. (Currently Amended) The material according to claim 21, wherein ~~characterized in that~~ said unstable fraction constitutes between 5 and 50% of its volume.

23 -30. (Cancelled).

31. (New) The material according to claim 1, wherein the unstable fraction decomposes in air between the operating temperature of the electrical contact and the melting point of said metal, with the release of a gas capable of destabilizing the electric arc in air.

32. (New) The material according to claim 21, wherein the unstable fraction decomposes in air between the operating temperature of the electrical contact and the melting point of said metal, with the release of a gas capable of destabilizing the electric arc in air.